

Ans. 24-7-83

"Manderlay"
16 Enfield Road
WAINUI-O-MATA

Monday 6 December 1982

Dear Chris

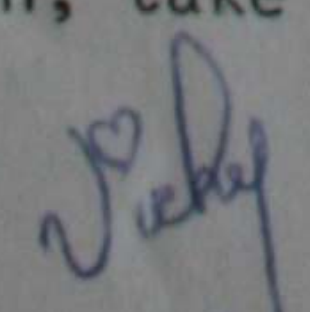
Thank you very much for your letter of 16 November. I too am somewhat intrigued by "Polly", and was disappointed that you are in the same boat - if anyone could throw light on the 'mystery woman' then you are that person. No doubt the photo in question came from Mrs Claude Burdan, from a number she has in a box, most of which mean very little to her as she inherited them from her husband's side of the family. How frustrating that he was the Prouse descendant, and not her, because she is keen to help, but we want ingrained family history and lore, not merely heresay. No use crying over spilt milk though, is it?

Polly's dress is actually in the possession of the local Historical Society and was shown on a mannequin recently. The handstitching is incredible, although the dress itself can't be handled, except where necessary, as it is liable to perish. I guess we wouldn't stand up to too much handling, either, after 110 years!

Am enclosing a sketch of the Sinclair Family Plot, with details which I have subsequently found out. A fellow historical society Member has persuaded the Forestry Department to support him in digging in the so-marked area in an endeavour to locate a couple of the graves. We only need to find two (according to Mr Harry Slingsby) to pin point the remainder of the sites. I don't know if I follow his reasoning, but he has my full support and I intend to be on the site with loaded camera the moment he starts. Forestry are prepared to clear the site (I wonder if that includes the 80 yr odd Macrocarpa and other well established trees) and acknowledge the site, so I am right behind Harry with my shovel! You will, of course, be kept in touch in this respect too.

Well, decided to bring my correspondence up to date, before it swamps me this side of Christmas. I may have mentioned that the young girl next door, with a toddler about the age of my own, would like to earn some money and as I would like to get into those archives in Wellington, we hope to come to an agreement for a couple of days a week - before we lose all our old contacts.

That's my New Year's Resolution - hope yours is something similar and that between us we can pinpoint some worthy matter. Until I see you both again, take care and all the Best.


Vicky Alexander